

RSU 56 Board of Directors Minutes
Board Meeting Amended Agenda- June 13, 2023 -6:30 pm
(This meeting will be held at Dirigo High School.
The board meeting will also be available via zoom and live streamed on You Tube.)

School Board Members Present: Barbara Chow, Bruce Ross, Larry Whittington, Elizabeth Kelly,
Tim Kelly, Marianne Young, Carl Lueders, Deanna Dolloff

School Board Members Absent: Angela Cushman, Natalie Sneller, Don Whittemore, Peru (Vacancy)

Staff Attending: Gena Cloutier, Pam Doyen, Cathy Arsenault, Jared Hodgkins, Nick
Karavas, Earl Couture, Kristin Arsenault, Jason Long, Brandy Bordeaux,
Chris/Michele Araujo, Jay Nicholson, Aaron Arsenault,
Heidi Broomhall

Also Attending: Danielle Williams, Marianne Hutchinson

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Barbara Chow, Board Chair, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:32pm. Audience introductions were made. Everyone on zoom and YouTube were welcomed.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Motion to add the following:

VIII Supt. Report- Additional stipend positions to report out

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

1. Minutes of the May 9, 2023 Board Meeting

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: B. Ross

C. Lueders- Not Voting

Motion Carried

2. Minutes of the May 23, 2023 Budget Meeting

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: M. Young

C. Lueders- Not Voting

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

RSU 56 was notified by the Maine Dept of Education Nutrition Dept that they will be performing a summer food service review. Nutrition Director Gena Cloutier will provide them with the necessary information and welcome them on-site in July.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ad-hoc Committee Report (Earl Couture, Jason Long, Kristin Arsenault, Danielle Williams)
The mission of RSU 56 is to **Prepare** our students to become **purpose-filled, skilled** members of the **local** and **global communities**.

Administrative Team Statement- Developed and adopted Spring 2022

The aim of the Administrative Team, following guidance from the board, is “to provide a safe and equitable place in which all students can thrive, and where students are encouraged to examine their world, their beliefs and their role in society through multiple perspectives” (01/21 Board Statement) while acquiring “the necessary skills and perspectives needed for a meaningful life and career” and developing “positive attitudes toward themselves and genuine respect for others” (Policy AD). With this in mind, controversial issues will be handled “in an atmosphere of freedom and thoroughness,” (Policy IMB) following the policies, procedures, and Maine Learning Results as adopted by RSU 56.

Ad Hoc Committee Purpose

“The Board hereby establishes an Ad Hoc Civil Rights Committee with the charge of gathering data and reporting annually to the school board on relevant Civil Rights happenings (good or bad) in RSU 56.....

The Superintendent (or designee) will provide an annual report to the RSU 56 Board of Directors describing the work of the committee and any relevant information or recommendations.”

Ad Hoc Committee Composition

“The CRED will include in its membership at least one RSU 56 School Board member, the RSU 56 Advisors of Civil Rights Teams, Building administrators, and up to six community or school stakeholders recommended by the Superintendent. The Committee Chair shall be chosen by the committee, but must be a member of the RSU 56 School Board. Membership is determined annually following relevant policy or, where no policy exists, at the recommendation of the Superintendent.”

Sonya Arsenault: DES volunteer Civil Rights Team Advisor, teacher

Danielle Williams: TWKDMS parent, licensed school psychologist

Earl Couture: community member, RSU 56 staff, military veteran

Alexa Casey Allen: DES volunteer Civil Rights Team Advisor, DHS alumni

Karolyn Buotte: DHS Civil Rights Team Advisor, parent/community member

Kristin Arsenault: DHS and TWKDMS librarian ed-tech

Chris Wainwright: DHS parent, and Oxford County Sheriff

Charlie Swan: DES Principal, parent/community member

Jason Long: TWKDMS Principal & Curriculum Coordinator

Pam Doyen: DHS Principal & Superintendent

Larry Whittington: Board Member

Barbara Chow: Board Member

Angela Cushman: Board Member, Committee Chair

Diane Gallagher: River Valley Healthy Communities Coalition

Climate and Culture Survey

55% of students in grades 7-12 - (was 52% in 20/21)

57% of staff members - (was 76% in 20/21)

Administered in Winter of 2022/2023- Some new questions, some continued

Reported frequency of **hearing** inappropriate comments at school

Reporting Group	Context	Never/Rarely	Regularly +
	Staff Present	63.00%	37.00%
Students 9-12	Staff Absent	43.20%	56.80%
Students 7-8	Staff Present	73.60%	26.40%
	Staff Absent	38.20%	61.80%
Staff	Staff Present	70.40%	29.60%

Students do know better

More students report to hear inappropriate comments when staff are not around

Perception: **Students** valuing multiple perspectives and diversity

	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
Students 9-12	10.80%	19.80%	38.70%	17.10%	13.50%
Students 7-8	7.90%	30.30%	27.60%	26.30%	7.90%
Staff	2.20%	12.10%	35.20%	36.30%	14.30%

Since students are more likely to hear inappropriate things when staff are not around, that may explain why staff have a higher opinion of student conduct than the students have.

Perception: **Staff** valuing multiple perspectives and diversity

	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
Students 9-12	5.40%	12.60%	33.30%	27.90%	20.70%
Students 7-8	3.90%	18.40%	34.20%	31.60%	11.80%
Staff	1.10%	2.20%	18.70%	45.10%	33.00%

Also of note, the staff have a higher opinion about themselves than the students report

Most students do see an issue

Students generally agree that they as a group can do better valuing others

Reported to have **heard** specific harassment within 2 years

Jason made a graph showing the percentages of different types of harassments within the different student and staff groups. The types of harassment were: Racism, Gender-based harassment & Other harassment

Examples?

Any instance or instances IN THE PAST TWO YEARS where people...

Experienced or witnessed **racism**:

Harassment based on **gender identity or sexual orientation**

Harassment based on **socio-economic status, religion, disability, etc.**

Feel free to share anything else- **positive or negative.**

There were many examples on in all of these areas

What is being done about it?

Traditional Consequences, Confrontation and Education, Civil Rights Teams

RSU 56 Behavioral Data

District-wide All Major Office Referrals: 1,281

District-wide Civil Rights Violation Referrals: 30 (2.3%)

Consequences depend on the circumstances, and include

- Suspension
- Detention
- Instruction and Restitution

25 different students committed a civil rights violation

There were some responses to the questions:

Witnessed **staff confront students** about harassment & Witnessed **students confront students** about harassment?

DES: Civil Rights Team Update

- Maintained bulletin board by the office
- State-wide day of welcome
- 10 regular members, 2-3x per month
- Students presented at an assembly during Black History month
- Read across America focus on how DES is one community but we are all unique individuals.
- First full year pilot for grades 3-5

TWKDMS: Civil Rights Team Update

- Day of Welcome sign creation
- 11 regular members in the fall, now more like 4 regulars, 2x per month
- Student-led conversations about school climate and related issues
- Tried different foods from different cultures as part of a diversity project
- Watched and discussed a film

Dirigo Civil Rights Team

In keeping with the mission to “increase the safety of...school students by reducing bias-motivated behaviors and harassment in our schools” we did the following:

- Maintained a Holidays and Observances board (by gym)
- Maintained a monthly focus board (stairwell)
- Participated in the state-wide Day of Welcome (11/4- welcoming messages around school, posters for classrooms, handed out stickers)
- Students organized participation in awareness events
- Met weekly during Activity Period and met weekly after school
- Increased student participation to five (up from two)

Ad Hoc Committee Outcomes thus far

District-team trained by MSMA

Admin-team trained by former DHS students

Established pilot Civil Rights Team at DES

Increased activity of Civil Rights Teams 6-12

Regular collection and presentation of local data

Ad Hoc Committee maintains minutes for FOIA as requested

So, what is the bottom line?

According to staff and students, we can do better.

Recommendations for the Board

- Renew the Ad Hoc committee to continue to collect local information and data

- Continue to support Civil Right Team Advisor positions

- Continue annual presentations to inform the Board

The group wants to keep the data local and continue with the groups in the schools.

The board had some questions for the group. There was a feeling that though we are doing better we still have work to do, we are moving forward. Civil Rights teams are very important.

2. Motion to continue the Civil Rights Ad-hoc Committee for the 2023-24 school year.

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: M. Young

Motion Carried

3. Approval of the board meeting dates for 2023-24

Motion: M. Young

Seconded: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

4. First Reading of Policy ADAA- School System Commitment to Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Motion Carried

5. First Reading of Policy EEAEAA-R- Drug and Alcohol Testing of School Bus Drivers Administrative Procedure

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Motion Carried

6. First Reading of Policy IHBAL- Grievance Procedure for Persons with Disabilities

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS

1. Region 9 Updates (Bruce Ross/Brian Keene)

Region 9 met this past Wednesday June 7th. There is a group spearheading to look over for the grant that was received for the welding lab, are in the process of deciding how the facility will be built, if it will be added onto or a stand alone. Once it is decided where the building will go will

help them decide where the second grant for the culinary arts would go. Some directors went to the Forester Tech event. Many of the people were certified in their different areas of study. Some participated in the Serve Safe exam, others took their CNA tests. There was 100% passed their CNA tests. Last Tuesday was the Adult Ed graduation. During the meeting they went over the annual increases for different people within Region 9 and discussed with the Board.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent's Report: Pam Doyen

Tomorrow, June 14th is the last day of the 2022-23 school year. There will not be late arrival as there will be early dismissal. All RSU 56 staff will convene in the SCC for a luncheon at 12:30, with a recognition of any retiring staff and prizes will be drawn. Board members are welcome to attend. If any board members would like to donate a raffle item please feel free to do so. Graduation events were successful last week. We honored all 52 of our seniors because all of them were eligible to graduate. Thank Bruce & Barbara for attending the graduation ceremony. It is always nice to have board members attend.

Administrator's Report: Gena Cloutier, Nutrition Director

School Nutrition- End of Year 2023

Meals Served:

	Breakfasts	Lunches	Days
Sept	6223	9290	21
Oct	5857	8752	19
Nov	5561	7956	17
Dec	4693	6612	15
Jan	5394	7288	16
Feb	4595	6369	15
March	6772	9378	22
April	5076	6969	15
May	7371	9876	22
June	<u>2753</u>	<u>3592</u>	8
	54,295	76,082	

Reimbursement

Breakfast	Lunch
54,295 x 2.67= \$144,967.65	76,082 x 4.43= \$337,043.26

Other Programs

C.A.C.F.P- Child and Adult Care Food Program

Operated at the elementary for the afterschool program

Local Foods Fund- \$1 back for every \$3 spent on local foods- used for fruit, veggies and meat this year

Fresh Fruit and Veggie Program- Pleased to announce that the elementary and middle school were once again chosen to operate this program for SY25

Commodities Monies

- We received over \$45,000 in funds to be spent of brown box items, DOD Fresh or NOI items
- Brown box- Meats, cheeses, vegetables, canned and frozen fruits
- DOD Fresh- Fresh produce we are able to order once a week from a central carrier

- NOI- Net Off Invoice- a discount applied to a final product, example premade pizza French toast, chicken patties

Commodities monies were lowered for next year. We will receive \$25,855.32

New Menu Changes

- Lots of scratch cooking going on-

Homemade rolls and biscuits along with utilizing wraps to make Taquitos

Pizza Crust

Meatballs

Bread

New “theme days” at the middle and high levels- Soup, Mexican, Asian, American, Italian

Beef stew with local beef, fish from the Gulf of Maine, scratch meals to hit the theme of the day.

New & Improved

New equipment added or on it’s way

Newest addition: New Freezer at TWKDMS

Vending Machine: Will be placed at TWKDMS- This will vend breakfast and afterschool snacks along with school approved snack items.

There were some questions regarding the new vending machine at the middle school and how it would work.

New Event

1st Annual Veteran’s Luncheon. Went over well. Alt Ed served the luncheon.

Being audited. The last audit was 2021. This will be an on-site audit.

The nutrition dept has been chosen for a week long culinary training that will be in August for 3 people in Westbrook.

B. Ross: Asked about the free breakfasts/lunches? What is the status for next year?

Gena: Will stay the same. Will be asking for applications to be filled out by families. A mailing will be going out after July 1.

The question was also asked for any plans for new equipment? Gena: Had talked about the dishwasher but new parts were put in and all seems good for next year.

Administrator’s Report: Nick Karavas

DHS Spring Sports Total Events: 72, 1 canceled- Had JV games this year more than last at the HS level, possibly move to a Saturday schedule

DMS Spring Sports Total Events: 40, 3 canceled- Tougher to get JV games, we were 1 of 4 schools that had a JV team but still were able to get some; working to increase them for next year.

Overall seasons went well: HS - Softball made playoffs; Baseball played in Prelims; Boys & Girls Tennis we are looking to extend the season length, very young teams in both boys & girls tennis teams; Track & Field- Bode Gray-Went onto States, he got the Dirigo Discus Record Breaker: 130’ 2”

Great Participation across the board.

MS- Softball made playoffs; Baseball - Played in Championship game vs Monmouth

Track & Field- Had a championship meet- Had a lot of athletes participating this year.

Looking forward to next fall: We will have Football, Field Hockey, Cross Country, Soccer (8 person) boys & girls, Golf

MS: Field Hockey, Soccer (boys & girls), Cross Country

Nick will be working with the coaching staff over the summer to be sure athletes can take part in multi sports.

5th Graders- Went very well. This has given teams more athletes but we have adapted for the increase. Next year will move forward with it as well. It is providing more opportunities for our 5th graders to participate and get involved.

B. Ross: Asked if MS has Football- Nick: replied that MS does not have football, it is through Dixfield Rec

E-Sports: Want to revisit this. Spoke on it a couple of years ago. When there are opportunities for athletes or students in general, Nick wanted to make sure he was advocating for them. A couple of facts from this fall regarding E-Sports: MPA works with Play VS- a nationwide program which give scholarships to colleges that have E-Sports as one of their athletic programs. 45% of E-Sport athletes at the high school level said E-Sports is their first school sponsored activity. This could be an overlap with our current student athletes that we have here at DHS...feels this will also include others that aren't necessarily participating within any type of extra curricular events, which is why Nick feels it would be a good possible addition. They are able to develop strategic thinking and communication skills while developing school pride and a sense of belonging. This is done remotely on campus within the state of Maine & nationwide, if it gets up to that level and they do qualify, with no travel required. There are tournaments. Scouts actually go and watch athletes participate. In the fall of 2022 22 schools with over 220 students participated, see that number growing. Play VS has given over \$700,000 in scholarships to high school students across the country to continue their education. Also have heard of students from Dirigo after graduation that have participated in events for E-Sports or have actually communicated with community colleges or universities within the New England area to see if they wanted to be part of their program. Nick is bringing this information to the board, he has not done anything at this time with E-Sports. He believes that he can take the next step without increasing the budget with the massive amount of grants and opportunities that the MPA offers as well as nationwide that can be applied for.

B. Chow- commented that this was brought to the board before and it was turned down. We are pretty tight on budget. Feels it needs to go to the whole board to decide before the kids get excited about it. It's not going to stay a grant all the time.

Nick replied: This is just a projection, sees a grant opportunity for this program for 5 years.

There seems to be with these programs that are up & coming, to get more athletes involved...there is money there that is unused. One of the biggest things within sports that has to be budgeted for is transportation and with E-Sports everything is done on campus.

After more discussion, it was decided that it should be put on the agenda for the board to at least explore it and have it at the June 27th board meeting. Pam asked if it should be put on the next board meeting for a vote or put under general consensus? Pam speaking as the principal of DHS & the Superintendent of the district feels this would be a positive step forward for DHS. Feels there may be some overlay between the current athletic students, but also this would be this 45% that Nick mentioned across the country. She feels we would have more than 45% of students interested in E-Sports alone that are not participating currently in any extra or co-curricular activities. She would also agree that if we went for a grant, we could at least judge the interest of DHS students in this program and as always we are going to reassess programs when the budget is done to move forward, so would not want it to impact the budget moving forward, but would be something that should be looked at on a pilot basis with grants.

Stipended and Coaching Positions:

James Hamalainen, co-drama club advisor

Abby Johnson, co-drama club advisor

TWKDMS Civil Rights Co-Advisors: Danielle Williams, Michele Arajao, Ella Couture

TWKDMS Student Council: Theresa Cyr

TWKDMS Debate Club: Elaine Finnegan

TWKDMS 8th Grade Class Advisor: Katie Houghton

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Student Representative Report: Diana Cayer emailed Pam her report: Graduation went well for everyone and the students that went to project grad had fun. Underclassmen are wrapping up classes. Everyone is looking forward to summer. Softball & baseball are playing each other in a charity game on Thurs June 15th at Sally Clark field at 3pm. Feel free to join them.
2. Policy Committee- Nothing to report
3. Finance Committee- Towns are voting today. Hopefully it'll pass with no problems. Heard from people that there was low voter turnout.
4. Curriculum Committee- Not met
5. Buildings & Grounds Committee- Not met
6. Negotiations Committee- Not met
7. Personnel Committee- N. Sneller not available
8. Ad-Hoc Committee- Report out tonight

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

B. Ross: Who maintains the softball field for the high school? Pam replied that we maintain it. B. Ross: He has heard some concerns that it's been in disarray. Do you know if things are being kept up more than just the lawns being mowed? Nick: There are improvements that need to be done on the dugouts, specifically such as doors on either end so that we can maintain them. Feels that the reason we don't have as many issues with the baseball dugout is that it is directly across from the school. B. Ross: possibly it's something that can be discussed with Kenny and can be something that can be taken care of this summer. N.K.: There are definitely things that need to be done at the field to improve it.

C. Lueders- Mentioned having lights around the ball field...and possibly Oxford County Sheriff would be more than happy to drive in around there once in a while.

L. Kelly: Question: Spoke to Pam a few months back about looking into a rating system for materials in our library. Has Pam found out anything about that? Or if the board is interested in looking into it? Specifically, materials of sexual acts, pictures of nudity, that is available to high school & middle school students, things along that nature as well as violence. Is this something that can start next school year that we might want to look into? She mentioned another school has already done that in the state this last week. There could be a rating system such as movies for a certain age...is that something that we could pursue? Whatever is in the library that a child could go read or take out.

B. Chow: We do have a policy, if there is an issue there is a procedure. Is this micromanaging? Who is determining this rating system? That is not my realm. We could have a discussion at the next meeting to see if the board has any interest in doing this. That's not our job. Our job is to delegate that. L. Kelly: Those are all good questions, and ones I would be interested in finding out. Putting it out there for dialogue. Would rather be proactive rather than reactive. It could be no and that's ok

B. Chow: I did go to the graduation. It was all wonderful.

C. Lueders: Ad-Hoc-Civil Rights- Still feel this district is way above the norm about being respectful to other people for who they are and not what they are. Think we're doing a great job.

ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: M. Young

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm